

of the word has been carried out have, in many instances, led to problems for which the exact or mathematical methods do not suffice. The question still awaits a universally approved answer: "Where and how can the thinking mind grasp the whole of that region which we broadly define as the life of the mind?" Many ways and many answers have suggested themselves. The history of Philosophical Thought is mainly concerned with tracing and explaining them.

Having thus arrived at a crude definition of the task which the history of philosophical Thought has to fulfil, the question arises how the whole subject can be conveniently grouped and divided. The courses of philosophical Thought have been so numerous and intricate, crossing and recrossing each other so frequently, that the historian has no little difficulty in choosing a starting-point. Histories of philosophy have indeed been written in great number.¹ They have generally taken up the

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Histories of
philosophy.

¹ By far the greater part of the work has been done by German historians, among whom during the nineteenth century the most prominent are—H. Ritter ('Geschichte der Philosophie,' 12 vols., 1836-53, of which several parts have been republished), Chr. Aug. Brandis ('Handbuch der Geschichte der Griechisch-Römischen Philosophie,' 1835-60, and a smaller work in 2 vols., 1862-64), J. E. Erdmann ('Versuch einer Wissenschaftl. Darstellung der neuer. Philos.,' 1834-53). After these pioneer works, written under the influence of Schleiermacher and Hegel, had to some extent cleared the ground, laid bare the sources and amassed an enormous amount of material, we

come upon a second period of philosophical historiography in the more comprehensive and finished works of E. Zeller ('Die Philosophie der Griechen,' 3 vols., 1844-52, and subsequent editions much enlarged), Kuno Fischer ('Geschichte der neuern Philosophie,' 8 vols., 1854-99), and a new work by Erdmann (2 vols., 1865, and subsequent editions) embracing the whole history of Philosophy. The three last-mentioned works are all inspired by the Hegelian philosophy, from the stricter formulæ of which the authors have gradually emancipated themselves, most of all Zeller, who was much influenced by Strauss and, together with him, by modern scientific notions. After these